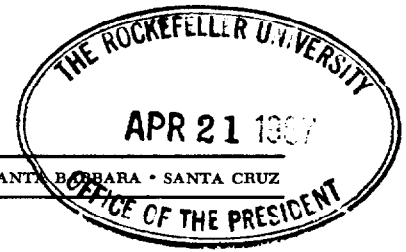


Barth

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE

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DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY  
RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92502

16 April 1987

Dear Josh,

More info. for your lineage.

I just read, for the first time, a copy of  
an oral history - Lester Barth being questioned  
by Manning.

Note the marked paragraphs on p 2 of 15  
enclosed.

My best  
Barth

re Barth as Heilbrunn, then Childs, student.

Why was Heilbrunn fired?

x ✓ J.A. Morre  
✓ 4/22/87

LESTER GEORGE BARTH

1905 - 1979

Interviewer was Professor Kenneth R. Manning  
Program in Science, Technology & Society  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Portions of Professor Manning's comments, not directly relevant to Woods Hole, Marine Biological Laboratory or Dr. Barth, were deleted from this transcript.

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KM: Interview with Dr. Lester Barth, January 25, 1977: Now you say that you met Dr. Just--what year can you recall?

LGB: Well, the first time I met him was here in Woods Hole in the summer of 1926. And, of course, when I say I met him--I was a first year graduate student and my sponsor, Dr. Heilbrunn, had taken his degree with Just, under the direction of Lillie, F. R. Lillie. At any rate, Just was the kindest person I have ever met up against. There was a generation difference, but he didn't talk down to me at all. I went to his laboratory and he showed me in great detail just exactly how to handle the invertebrate eggs here--especially Arbacia, Echinarachnius, the ones that he was using. And this was something a little new for me. Heilbrunn was the same sort of person, of course, and they were friends, but generally, professors in this country were professors, you know, and students were students. They wouldn't waste too much time on you. Just wasn't like that at all. So that was the first meeting.

KM: And that was the summer at Woods Hole?

LGB: Summer at Woods Hole, 1926.

KM: Now did you come to Woods Hole subsequently each summer as a graduate student?

LGB: Yes, and Just was here each summer for quite a while and I used to eat at the same table with Just at the dining hall. We had big, long tables, 13 to 15 people at each table. And Just belonged to a certain group at that time who were his real friends, real friends. And there was good talk at the table--Heilbrunn and Schrader, Lancefield, and, oh, Packard--other people I could mention, who were friends of Just.

KM: Now, these were mainly colleagues?

LGB: Yes.

KM: And Dr. Lillie, of course, was somewhere else?

LGB: Well, Lillie was here every summer. He was Director of the Laboratory and I met Lillie, of course, too. As a matter of fact, I took my degree with him finally. But he was not very active in the laboratory at that time and Just was doing all the work on fertilizin and fertilization of eggs . . .

KM: Now, you first started out at Pennsylvania, I would assume. You say you worked with Dr. Heilbrunn.

LGB: I first started out at the University of Michigan, with Heilbrunn. And Heilbrunn was very abruptly dismissed from the University of Michigan. And I had to find a new place to go and Dr. Heilbrunn arranged so that I could take my work with Frank Lillie at the University of Chicago.

KM: Now, I think it was in 1930--oh, maybe 1931, that Dr. Just went to Europe.

LGB: He was there in the spring of 1931, when I was there.

KM: That's right. Now, this was the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute?

LGB: Yes.

KM: O.K. Now, can you give me some idea of what work at that Institute was like?

LGB: Well, the Institute was divided into three groups. There was a genetics group, there was an embryology group and there was a cellular biology group, which was mostly protozoology, and Hartmann was head there. Mangold was head of the embryology.

KM: Did you know an Adolph von ?Hallenbach?

LGB: No.

KM: Well, it seems that Dr. Just knew him very well. He cites him as a person very inspirational in his work there at the Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute.

LGB: Well, that may have been somebody I just didn't meet.

KM: I think he was actually a clergyman of sorts.

LGB: Yes. Well, Just became acquainted with a lot of people besides scientists--and even in Germany, too. For a while he was going around with the Crown Prince of Germany (laughter). And, of course, well, the contrast at that time, 1931, you can well imagine: Just living in this country and Just living in Germany. And, I think

KM: Was the community here then--all these houses? For instance, this house?

LGB: Well, this was built around 1905, 1910, somewhere around that time. These are all pretty old houses along here. The Gray place there--even older. We've got pictures of gas lamps out here in the early 1900s. And this whole street is an interesting one. This Buzzards Bay Avenue here: You go up here a little way and you go by Thomas H. Morgan's house. You go along a little farther and you get to E. B. Wilson's house. Then, maybe one you don't know so well is Stockard. Well, he was head of the Anatomy Department at Cornell University Medical School. Then Calkins, you know, the protozoologist . . . They're all up there; they're ghosts -- they're all up there. And then around the corner on Gardiner Road there are two Lillies -- F. R. Lillie and R. S. Lillie, his brother. "R.S." was a great man too. He just didn't have the administrative tie-up . . .

KM: You know something that's interesting to me: In this research the one thing that just shines through all the correspondence is F. R. Lillie's strong sense of integrity. Now he must have had it or it just couldn't shine through the way it is shining through. I get the feeling of a very strong, honest man.

LGB: Oh, yes! A very shy man, too. Yes. Not the imposing man you would think of. He was physically imposing but he had a very poor voice. He would talk and mumble a little bit (chuckle) and everybody had to listen to him. And his brother was even much more shy; but Lillie was shy too. But, as you say, he was just a hundred percent honest. And not only that. You know, an honest man can be an awful pain in the neck. (laughter) Lillie was not that kind of honest man. In fact, he cut corners just a little bit. For me, he cut a terrific corner. When Heilbrunn got fired from the University of Michigan I had to leave too. I mean, how could I stay there, as his student. So I went to Chicago and Lillie said, "Well, let's see what you have here and how much credit we can give you here at the University of Chicago". "So", he said, "you've got a Master's at Michigan, so we'll count that as a year". Well, that was pretty good. Then he said, "Let's see, you've been at Woods Hole for four summers, haven't you? Well, that's four quarters here at Chicago, so that's another year". I got my degree at Chicago in one year. And the dissertation work I had done here with Heilbrunn, not with anybody at Chicago at all. Child, Dr. C. M. Child, assumed the responsibility. So technically I took my degree under Child, but on the basis of one year's residence at Chicago. You couldn't do a thing like that today in a hundred years. You'd have to start practically all over.

KM: So, was Dr. Lillie at that time pretty big in the department there?